

UK Creative Writing Professor, Nikky Finney, Wins Prestigious Award

Recently, University of Kentucky creative writing Professor Nikky Finney won the 2011 National Book Award in Poetry for her recent work, "Head Off & Split." Finney is UK's first National Book Award winner.



"Her poems, carefully and finely honed words and passages strung together like beautiful pearls, combine common experiences, searing emotions and sometimes uncomfortable history to speak truth in uncommonly beautiful and resonant ways. Today, what students and her colleagues at UK have known for years, a nation now understands – the treasure that is Nikky Finney and her poetry, which reaches and touches us all," said University of Kentucky President Eli Capilouto.

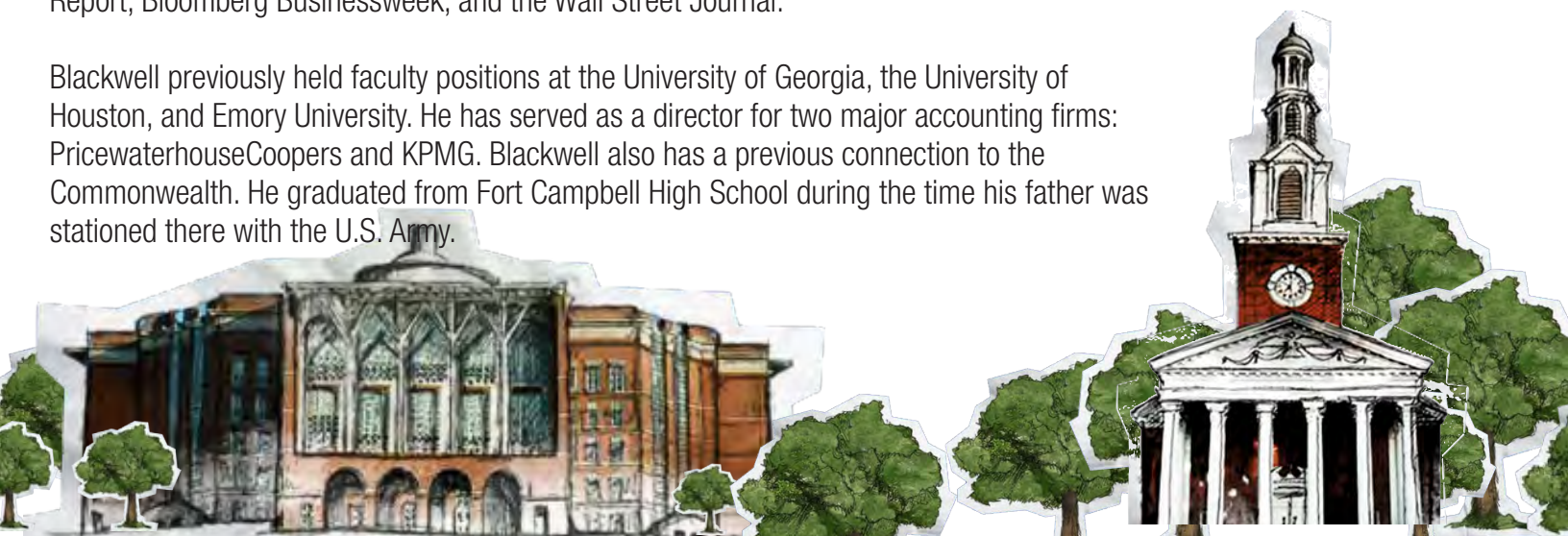
The National Book Award website says the poems in Finney's "Head Off & Split" "sustain a sensitive and intense dialogue with emblematic figures and events in African-American life: from Civil Rights matriarch Rosa Parks, to former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, from a brazen girl strung out on lightning, to a terrified woman abandoned on a rooftop during Hurricane Katrina.

Texas A&M's Blackwell to Lead Gatton College

David W. Blackwell, former associate dean for graduate programs at Texas A&M University's Mays Business School, has been tapped as the new dean of the University of Kentucky Gatton College of Business and Economics.

Blackwell earned his bachelor's degree in economics and his doctoral degree in finance from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Under his leadership, the Mays Business School's MBA programs were highly ranked on a consistent basis in national quality assessments done by a number of leading publications, including Financial Times, U.S. News and World Report, Bloomberg Businessweek, and the Wall Street Journal.

Blackwell previously held faculty positions at the University of Georgia, the University of Houston, and Emory University. He has served as a director for two major accounting firms: PricewaterhouseCoopers and KPMG. Blackwell also has a previous connection to the Commonwealth. He graduated from Fort Campbell High School during the time his father was stationed there with the U.S. Army.



UK BioPharm Complex Completed with Opening of Two Research Floors

The previously “shelled,” top two floors of the University of Kentucky’s BioPharm Complex were dedicated at a formal ceremony recently, capping construction on the 286,000 square-foot facility. The building is home to the UK College of Pharmacy, the nation’s 5th-ranked pharmacy school. The fourth floor will house College of Pharmacy researchers while the fifth floor will have a cancer research focus, with faculty and researchers from the Markey Cancer Center utilizing the space.



“This is a stunning facility,” said UK President Eli Capilouto. “These two new floors hold promise for the future of the University’s research enterprise. It provides us the type of leading-edge facilities that will help UK retain and recruit some of the best scientific minds in the world – research leaders who will help us improve health care for Kentuckians across the Commonwealth.”

Though construction on the fourth and fifth floor was only recently completed, the new space is already paying dividends. The UK College of Pharmacy and Markey Cancer Center have partnered to recruit two high-profile researchers to join the faculty.

Peixuan Guo, one of the top three nanobiotechnology experts in the world, will share a joint appointment with the UK College of Pharmacy and Markey Cancer Center. He will be bringing four research faculty members, five postdoctoral fellows, and 13 graduate students, and more than \$10 million in research funding. For the past four years, he has also been the director of a National Institutes of Health Nanomedicine Development Center, one of eight centers in the country, which is moving to UK.

Jon Thorson, who started at UK on Oct. 31, was recruited to the UK College of Pharmacy to lead the College’s new Center for Pharmaceutical Research and Innovation (CPRI). Thorson’s research is focused on developing antibiotics and anticancer drugs from natural products.

